

# **EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

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**REMARKS  
BY  
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADVANCES IN ELECTRICAL  
ENGINEERING  
INAUGURAL SESSION  
IUB CAMPUS  
DECEMBER 19, 2013**

Dr. Samir M. El-Ghazaly, Division Director, Electrical, Communications, and Cyber Systems, National Science Foundation, who is joining us from America via Skype

Mr. Saifur Rahman, Chair, Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust, Independent University, Dhaka

Dr. Shamimuzzaman Bosunia, President, The Institution of Engineers Bangladesh

Dr. Pran K. Saha, President, Bangladesh Section of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers

Dr. Mohammad S. Alam, Chair, International Program Committee, ICAEE 2013

... and all who believe like me in the role of science in making this world a better place, in making Bangladesh a better place.

Asalaam 'malaikum and good morning.

I have a large nose ...

There are certain advantages to having a large nose.

This nose of a certain dimension is pretty good at sniffing out trouble.

As I meandered through the program for this conference, my nose twitched more and more as I turned each page and it twitched uncontrollably when I read about a session entitled "A Double-Ridged Horn Antenna Design in Canola Oil for Medical Imaging." I knew immediately that I was in trouble ... I recognized the individual words, but to me they seemed randomly picked out of Webster's Dictionary and lined up on a page ... they made no sense to me whatsoever.

So, I called my son who just received his PhD in astrophysics, and I shared my dilemma with him. There was a long pause on the other end of the line as my son sought the right words ... finally, he responded, "Dad, why don't you just leave the science alone and talk about something else?!"

That sounds like good advice, so I've decided to set aside my discourse about double-ridged horn antennae swimming around in Canola oil and focus on something else ... something that is very close to my heart ... Bangladesh.

First, I suggest to our friends from abroad to set aside any notion that Bangladesh is some tiny poor country tucked away in a distant corner of South Asia... notable only for cyclones and floods and disastrous fires and building collapses in the apparel industry.

Forget all of those notions.

The reality is quite the opposite: Bangladesh is the seventh largest country in the world; Bangladesh is the third largest Muslim-majority country in the world. It is a country of deep strategic interest as it is a moderate, tolerant, secular, democratic alternative to violent extremism in a troubled part of the world. As it strengthens its ties with its neighbors – India, China, Myanmar – it bolsters stability in this region. It is a major contributor of forces to global peacekeeping operations around the world, thus helping to make the world a safer place for us all. It plays a critical role in enabling the world to achieve global food security, even as the world's population surges toward nine billion within my lifetime, 'nshallah. The list goes on ... but you get the idea ... Bangladesh matters ... Bangladesh matters a lot to the world.

And set aside any idea of Bangladesh as a poor country. To the contrary, Bangladesh is a rich country, albeit one with many poor people. Bangladesh is blessed with fertile soil, ample water, perfect growing climate that enables three crops a year, huge deposits of high quality, low sulfur coal, and significant reserves of natural gas, thus ensuring the potential to provide ample power and energy to drive this surging economy, an economy that has grown at 6% a year for the past 20 years. Bangladesh's greatest asset is the people ... the most energetic, dynamic, creative, generous, entrepreneurial and resilient people whom I know ... the people ... the people truly are Bangladesh's greatest blessing.

I believe Bangladesh ... rich Bangladesh could be/should be a middle income country ... a country where all have the means to provide their families safe housing, ample, nutritious food, good healthcare, quality education.

Let me explain my vision of middle-income Bangladesh.

Bangladesh could be/should be the world's largest exporter of ready-made garments and household textiles, replacing China.

Bangladesh could be/should be a major global player in generic pharmaceuticals, shoes, finished leather goods, small freighters and ocean-going tugs, information technology, frozen shrimp, quality bone china, flowers, producing and processing silk and jute, and the list goes on and on, creating in the process millions upon millions of new jobs, creating in the process a large and growing middle class.

Bangladesh could/should/must launch an education revolution to educate and train its young people so they can build the countries of the Middle East, Southeast Asia and, of course, Bangladesh itself. Instead of exporting unskilled labor, Bangladesh could contribute doctors, nurses, professors, professionals, electricians, carpenters, and other skilled manpower to build other nations of the region as well as Bangladesh.

Bangladesh could/should/must continue its successful agricultural revolution, so the nation becomes food self-sufficient. It could create a huge agricultural processing sector to reduce food wastage.

Bangladesh could/should/must use its strategic geographical position as the nexus of the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor, which will be one of the great trade routes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The challenges to becoming the next Asian tiger are real: deficient ports, roads and railroads, inadequate supplies of power and energy, poor rule of law, endemic corruption, tangles of red tape, and deepening political instability.

At the moment, political instability is the greatest challenge as the nation's major political parties remain deadlocked on finding an agreed way forward to ensure the parliamentary elections are free and fair and credible in the eyes of the Bangladeshi people... that the elections offer Bangladeshi voters a choice. I hope the leaders of the major parties hear the demands of the people for credible elections. I believe the major parties must deepen their dialogue to find some way to work together to provide Bangladeshis the elections they want and deserve.

All these challenges are serious, but each is surmountable. Again, Bangladesh is blessed ... blessed by having only challenges that can be overcome.

So, that's my take of Bangladesh ... that's my hope that Bangladesh will become a middle-income country in terms of citizens' quality of life ... that's my belief that Bangladesh will become the next Asian tiger ... I call it the Royal Bengal Tiger ... that Bangladesh will build the Sonar Bangla ... the Golden Bangladesh that Tagore dreamed of long ago ... the Golden Bangladesh that Bangladeshis and those of us who so love this wonderful nation dream of today.

Thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*